

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, EAGR, CH

SUBJ: REFERENCE NEWS ARTICLES DOWNPLAY DROUGHT, HIGHLIGHT NATIONAL
ATTENTION TO HUA'S OLD BAILIWICK

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE APRIL 7 ISSUE OF THE PRC RESTRICTED-CIRCULATION

DAILY REFERENCE NEWS (TSAN-KAO HSIAO-HSI) CARRIES UNDER THE HEADING
"CHINA IS STRUGGLING FOR AN ABUNDANT HARVEST," TRANSLATED EXCERPTS
FROM BRITISH AND AMERICAN PRESS ARTICLES CASTING DOUBT ON THE SEVERITY

OF CHINA'S DROUGHT AND HIGHLIGHTING THE INFUSION OF MEN, MONEY
AND RESOURCES INTO THE HUNAN DISTRICT ONCE ADMINISTERED BY
CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG. BOTH ARTICLES PORTRAY CHINA IN AN ESSENTIALLY
FAVORABLE LIGHT BUT MAY RAISE QUESTIONS OF CREDIBILITY IN THE MINDS
OF ALERT READERS. END SUMMARY.

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2. EXCERPTING SELECTIVELY FROM AN APRIL 4 LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH
ARTICLE ENTITLED "CHINA IS FIGHTING FOR AN ABUNDANT HARVEST,"
REFERENCE NEWS CASTS DOUBT ON THE CREDIBILITY OF THE STEADY DRUMBEAT
OF OFFICIAL PROCLAMATIONS AND ARTICLES DURING MARCH-APRIL ON THE
SEVERITY OF THE NATIONWIDE DROUGHT. THE ARTICLE NOTES THE
BELIEF OF "FOREIGN AGRICULTURE EXPERTS" THAT RAINFALL WITHIN
TWO-THREE WEEKS IN NORTH AND CENTRAL CHINA WOULD PERMIT A GOOD

HARVEST OF WINTER WHEAT. IN ANOTHER CONTEXT, THE ARTICLE NOTES MASSIVE MANPOWER MOBILIZATION IN SHANTUNG, SHANSI AND HOPEH BUT QUOTES "FOREIGN ANALYSTS" AS BELIEVING THAT SOIL MOISTURE THERE WAS SUFFICIENT; METICULOUS IRRIGATION WOULD PERMIT SURVIVAL OF THE CROPS.

3. THE OTHER FEATURED ITEM EXCERPTS FROM A ROSS MUNRO PIECE ON THE TRANSFORMATION INTO A TACHAI MODEL COUNTY OF HUNAN'S HSIANGTAN REGION; THE ARTICLE WAS RUN IN THE TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL AND PICKED UP BY THE MARCH 31 CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. THE THRUST OF THE PIECE IS FAVORABLE TO THE PRC AND QUITE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LEADERSHIP. OBSERVING THAT CHAIRMAN MAO HAD BEEN BORN IN THE REGION AND THAT CHAIRMAN HUA HAD BEGUN HIS POLITICAL CAREER THERE, MUNRO INDICATES THAT HSIANGTAN, EVEN BY COMPARISON WITH NORTH AMERICAN STANDARDS, IS VERGING ON MODERNIZATION. BUT THERE IS A CATCH: MUNRO ALSO NOTES HOW THE AREA IS BECOMING A NATIONAL MODEL --THROUGH THE "SPECIAL INCREASE" OF MANPOWER AND THE INFUSION OF A "LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY" FOR THE "ALREADY ADVANCED IRRIGATION SYSTEM."

4. COMMENT: CAREFUL CHINESE READERS ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL BE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE DROUGHT WAS OVERSTATED AND NATIONAL RESOURCES POURED INTO HSIANGTAN RATHER EXCESSIVE -- AT LEAST IN THE EYES OF FOREIGNERS.

WE MAY, OF COURSE, BE READING REFERENCE NEWS WITH TOO JAUNDICED AND EYE. BUT EVEN TAKING

THE ARTICLES AT FACE VALUE -- THAT IS, WITHOUT PERCEIVING A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO CAST DOUBT ON THE CREDIBILITY OF TOP OFFICIALS.

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THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE TWO ARTICLES IS REMARKABLE: ONE HIGHLIGHTING A BOOTSTRAP EFFORT TO FIGHT THE DROUGHT AND ANOTHER NOTING THE LIBERAL DIVERSION OF RESOURCES TO BUILD UP AN ALREADY WEALTHY AND ADVANCED DISTRICT.

GATES

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